

Black Female Vignette
Parks & Clark Church Translation Guide

Sharon is a 42 year-old African-American female who, up to six months ago, was a very successful self-employed business woman. Due to the economy, her business has suffered and she is finding it very difficult to get assistance from community resources she sought out on her own.

She has also been providing foster care for about 12 years. She has cared for some of the most challenging children in her years as a foster parent, but none as challenging as 11 year-old AB. AB has been in four foster homes since the age of 3. All foster parents have placed seven-day notices on her due to her very disruptive behavior in the home and community. AB has now been in Ms. Sharon's home for six months and she is very torn about what to do. Sharon feels as if she may not be able to properly care for her and get her the assistance she needs because her income is limited and so are community-based resources.

Sharon is very involved in her church and AB appears to enjoy the interactions with the other youth at the church as well, but she is sometimes very aggressive with the other children and some of the other members are beginning to complain. Sharon has overheard other people referring to AB as the "little demon-possessed" child. This makes Sharon sad because she has always viewed her congregation as her greatest source of support and comfort.

Sharon attends a Women's Support group at her church because she has had a difficult time coping since the decline of her business. Sharon has been in traditional therapy before and has not had the most positive outcome. Sharon states that she is misunderstood by people because she is a typically very soft-spoken, caring, and giving person. Because Sharon has felt highly criticized, misunderstood, singled-out, and oppressed by the system, she is feeling hopeless, broken, and ineffective as a parent.

Using the Parks-Clark Church Translation Guide, how would you communicate with Sharon and AB?

Black Male Vignette
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Timothy, a 17-year old African American male, is experiencing issues in various areas of his life. He is a senior in high school, but currently behind in his credits. He tends to be truant and has conflict with some of his teachers. Despite being capable of achieving academically, his grades are often below average. For the past year and a half he has associated with peers from school that have on occasion ditched school. He currently uses marijuana at least twice a week, and sometimes more if he is able to purchase it from friends.

He currently resides with his biological mother, and there is consistent tension and conflict, with poor communication skills. His mother is a consistent member of a local congregation, and on several occasions, the pastor has had interactions with the Timothy. While not active in church, he does attend from time to time with his mother. Timothy is uncertain of what it is that he wants to do after high school, but is interested in music. The pastor has recently set up a meeting for Timothy to meet with someone in the music industry.

Timothy has limited to no interaction with his biological father, who currently resides in another state. Timothy's mother states that she is tired of dealing with his "mess" and feels as though she is burdened dealing with her son. She jokingly mentions that "he needs deliverance and some therapy."

Using the Parks-Clark Church Translation Guide, how would you communicate with Timothy?